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STEWART

ON

TENDENCY TO DISEASE.

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ON TENDENCY

TO

DISEASE OF BODY AND MIND

IN

REFINED LIFE.

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ON TENDENCY

TO

DISEASE

OF

BODY AND MIND

IN

REFINED LIFE,

AND THE

GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF CURE.

BY

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LICENTIATE OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS.

Cum relego scripsisse pudet, quia plurima cerno
Me quoque, qui feci, indice, digna lini.

OVID. DE PONTO.

LONDON:

LONGMAN, RERS, ORME, BROWN, AND GREEN.

1828.

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The somewhat abstract principles contained in this little work might have been illustrated by a variety of cases which have been under the Author's care: but he feared that the detail would be too much connected with the circumstances of private life; and this consideration has, of course, withheld him.

Keppel Street, 1828.

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ON TENDENCY

TO

DISEASE OF BODY AND MIND,

&c. &c. &c.

PART I.

ON THE CAUSES OF DISORDER.

INTRODUCTION.

THE object of the following sketch is to direct attention to those indefinite states of being, both mental and corporeal, in which positive disease cannot be recognised, but where, from over excitement or preternatural hebetude of the system, any perilous consequence may be anticipated, unless

some powerful renovating agent be in time interposed. The subject should be doubly interesting; first, because few people are entirely exempt from the evils which it is intended to describe; and, secondly, because the general modes of cure can, with some confidence, be pointed out.

The able writings which have lately appeared upon indigestion, and the disorders more immediately consequent upon a depraved condition of the nervous system, have fully paved the way for one who, laying the inquiry a stage further back, shall consider the general laws which control the natural powers and functions of mind and body, in what way they may be violated or neglected, and how far their operation can be restored.

As, in pursuing a parallel inquiry like this, reference must be alternately

made to moral as well as physical agents, it will be proper to set out by declaring that, further than the ordinary reference to the brain and nerves, no attempt will be made to trace by what link things so opposite in character are connected, nor to measure capacity and function by any appreciable mechanism or property. It is not at all requisite to our purpose to pledge ourselves to systems still in embryo; besides, we are inclined to think that, if there be any thing clearly established, it is that our real knowledge of both mind and matter extends merely to a practical and experimental acquaintance with the familiar and sensible phenomena, or *secondary qualities*, of both; and this not in any collective sense, but as they actually occur, variously associated, and in detail. And although these abstract terms must, in common

with others, be continually used and referred to, yet, in strictness, we are compelled to allow, that of the true essence of both the one and the other we know positively nothing.

In estimating the common operation of circumstances upon men in existing society, and attempting to lighten the pressure of evil, much latitude must always be allowed for differences of constitution and temperament, and innate disposition; and due consideration should also be felt for such ills as are irremediable, and for various duties and callings, which demand, more or less, a sacrifice of individual well-being. But we talk most of means and modifying agents, because there are things submitted to our power and management. It is the office of the physician, not only to devise remedies for the ever-varying forms of disease already estab-

lished, but also to trace back to their source the springs of evil, and prevent their farther flow: and it is the proudest boast of the profession that its members have never been withheld from this duty by sordid or narrow-minded views. And, although in general we may leave to legislators and to political-economists the task of deciding upon the necessity and ultimate utility of many employments, we may remind them that their great maxim is, "to effect the greatest possible good, by the least possible evil."

There are many occasions, too, where our profession steps in with a paramount authority, to rescue the victims of more merciless systems, and to suspend all other claims until it has satisfied its own.

PROGRESS OF REFINEMENT.

REFINED FOOD OF CHILDREN.

THE power which man possesses of adopting and enduring various modes of life, though indefinite and by accidental and artificial circumstances exercised in ways innumerable, is by no means unlimited. It exists in greatest force from puberty to middle age; but its abuse too frequently dates from an earlier period. Infancy is a state of comparatively simple and passive existence; all children are liable to epidemic complaints, whatever be their condition; and among uncultivated people they suffer from local inconvenience, ignorance, and

prejudice; but, in refined life, the little victims are subjected to the peculiar evils of hereditary weakness and officious care. We see tender parents begin their toil of meddling and indulgence, by over exciting young people, and giving them food which is too fine and too nourishing. Articles of diet are sought out entirely freed from coarse admixture or dross; these soon pass from the stomach, which eagerly calls for a fresh supply of such easily digested matter; but, containing, in large proportion, the elements of chyle, they remain long exposed to the process of assimilation in the small intestines, where the absorbing lacteal vessels have an excess of work. The desired end of this ill-judged plan of nourishment, that, namely, of fattening and strengthening, is at first very frequently attained; but even this is a dan-

gerous advantage; for, the intestines being clogged, in consequence of the undue *remora* of the alimentary mass, the foundation is often laid of habitual constipation, plethora, nervous irritability, and, probably, a tendency to suffer from any accidental cause of disease. In other cases, nutrition is checked at its source by the excessive stimulation of the organs which are destined to effect it; and, from congestion in the mesenteric region, glandular obstructions and marasmus are speedily induced. These causes operate with surer effect upon children from birth delicate, and who are kept from free exercise and the open air, either by constitutional inertness, or the short-sighted kindness of *mammas* and *grandmammas*.

This theory will not appear paradoxical to one who considers generally the different condition of chil-

dren who are improperly interfered with, and of those who are left more alone; but he will be led to conclude, where positive causes of disease do not shew themselves, that disorders, and in particular chronic debilities, are not established in young people so much by the occasional ingestion of noxious matters (for these, when not amounting to absolute poisons, are readily disposed of, and frequently act beneficially as evacuants and depressors of inordinate appetite), but rather by the habitual and excessive use of rich concentrated food, and by a confined nursery life.

OVER-REFINED EDUCATION.

It is the same with the passions and the intellect of young persons. Anxious to keep evil at a distance,

and, if possible, to forestal the age of reason and reflection, instructors prematurely inspire caution and suspicion, and are much too exclusive in their choice of employment for the mind. Substituting their own cleverness for the instinctive demands of the restless curiosity and thoughtless enterprise of youth (which, expending itself upon every object, leads to an early acquaintance with danger, and begets the habit of struggling with difficulty), they will have every thing select and safe; and capriciously misdirect that spontaneous willingness which "loves whate'er it looks upon," and knows no care until it is suggested by more cunning heads.

It is impossible to do Nature's work for her; she is at all times jealous of interference, and even of assistance; and, in general, asks only employment and fair play. Yet great pains are

constantly taken to make "young people see with old eyes," and to "encumber them with help" when they should be allowed to grow and expand alone. They are kept from falling, instead of being taught to recover themselves when down. Refinement of the taste is generally looked to as a sure refuge from the injurious agency of rebellious passions; but this is a thing much more frequently talked about than understood. What is generally mistaken for this happy disposition is, the undue attention paid to the fashions and forms of a limited circle or period. Nothing is easier than to accustom one to value external qualities and elaborate details; and this habit once established, ruder and more intrinsic qualities displease. Straightened by arbitrary rules of correctness, and drilled according to some stiff model of the day, the

faculties, like the limbs, part with their native grace and character, and the individual is lost in the uniformity of the multitude. One may observe that, when the mind is the passive recipient of impressions, the chance of enjoyment is commonly diminished by the microscopic acuteness of the sense. The delight at first felt from exquisite music grows dull; but the ear for ever after sickens at coarser strains. While the continued possession of the superlative degree of excellence soon ceases to impart pleasure, the feelings are getting spoiled for every thing of inferior finish. But true refinement of taste—that cheerful creative elevation of thought, which embellishes every object, and ennobles every pursuit, which combines a number of faulty parts into a beautiful whole, and abstracts essential good from accidental evil—is not to be

mistaken for fastidiousness. It is as different in its nature as poetry from criticism.

All this, however, is of trifling moment, when compared with the mischievous ingenuity with which early talent and precocious disposition is forced and over-developed. The spur is used where the rein should be. Learning is aimed at through some short cut; pleasure is made easy and inviting: they come undiluted by dulness, unpurchased by labour—the rose without its thorn. The passions, eager for immediate gratification, will not endure the weariness of anticipation, and seize upon their bait; but, too young and too undisciplined to contain or digest their fill of occupation, they soon fly off to some new object which, in its turn, they but taste. In this way, neither pleasure nor employment is fully proved or

dwelt upon; and the inclinations get a habit of fickleness and frivolity, which leads to general disgust. And when any of these half-tasted enjoyments is shown in the back ground of a long vista of toil and care, as the reward of him who pursues the path of industry, unused to difficulty, the enervated youth shrinks at the means of success, and imagining that he has tried every thing, he despises the end of exertion. Thus cloyed, but not gratified—sophisticated, but having no real knowledge—the spoiled children of weak, indulgent parents, exhaust the freshness of their halcyon existence; and when the stubborn realities of after days are forced upon them, all the charm, all the *couleur de rose,* of life is gone!

Young people, when fashioned by the most studied restrictions into *little old men and women,* enter upon the stage

of real life with many unfavourable peculiarities operating against them. They do not start fair with those of their contemporaries, "made of sterner stuff," whose hardy and invigorating education has prepared them for suffering, and steeled them against future contests with difficulty. Eccentric and too susceptible, they fail in common-place duties, and exemplify what Swift has said—"that in ordinary affairs, a plain man is often more successful than a very quick one; as in dividing paper, an ivory blade is better than a razor."

It too frequently happens that they lose the best chance now given, by the buoyancy and elasticity of their new-sprung energies, of escaping from the multiplied ills, both physical and moral, which await them from continuance in a state too artificial. If clever and susceptible, they are sup-

plied exclusively with intellectual food; if delicate and inert, their indolence is allowed to repose: no sufficient effort is made to alter the tendency, however perilous, of their fine-edged sensibilities, and to approximate them to the natural standard.

NATURAL STANDARD OF VITAL ENERGY.

PERHAPS if called upon to say why we use the epithet *natural* in a partial, limited sense, we must allow that it has been employed arbitrarily, and that it is only in a conditional view, that we could suppose it possible for any creature to transgress beyond the dark, undefined bounds which fence in what is termed human nature. In no one of the known stages of society, from the precarious existence of the Esquimau to the pam-

pered holiday-life of the Parisian, have these necessary laws been evaded. To the curious in specimens of the various forms and modifications of beings or substances essentially the same, it may be interesting to observe how widely different individuals may be separated, by habits of life and condition, though equally members of the great family of man. If we take, on the one hand, the savage who endures, half-naked, the inclemency of the bitterest seasons, who can fast unhurt for several days, or appease the cravings of a wolfish appetite with balls of unctuous clay: and then, on the other hand, consider the young invalid lady, the tender plant of a conservatory, skreened from every blast, propped up by ingenious mechanism, fed with delicacies, the prey of purely imaginary terrors—what do we see? Merely nature in another

shape; the same great parent bearing, perhaps, more heavily upon a weaklier child. The transmitted delicacy of a long unmingled line of progenitors, the nerves so exquisitely strung as to sympathize with the most shadowy griefs of sentimental associates, are all gifts from the same power which provides for the terrible Mohawk or more loathed African. But we would address ourselves to reasonable people, and not to cavillers, and without using words in any strained or new sense. Our aim is to elucidate general principles, and not to give any overweening importance to definitions.

We think, then, that we are authorized in looking for our average or standard of health and energy (and it is with these alone that we have here any question) in the medium conditions of mankind, in all countries the

most numerous, and who have in every time possessed the earth. The rural classes; the decent citizens; people having education and employment, but neither over-informed nor overworked; the farmer and moderate proprietor; the man of action and enterprize; these have always supplied the poet, the sculptor, and the moralist, with their favourite models; and it is in their ranks, too, that the medical philosopher finds health and happiness best established. No false light need be thrown upon the picture of simple life to satisfy us that it is the freest from those evils, or rather tendencies to evil, which we have made the subject of our inquiry. Even among rude and plain people there are diseases in abundance; and some, too, as those dependant upon unfavourable locality, which luxury, or the appliances of refined arts, would ob-

viate. Besides, it must be admitted, as a fact well and fully established by scientific researches, that while refinement multiplies and prolongs many forms of disease, and predisposes to others, by inducing relaxation and enervation of the vital powers, yet it is not in the same proportion destructive of life. Disorders do not always kill the weakly in preference to the robust: there are many circumstances on the contrary, which tend to show that existence is not in very close correspondence with health and strength. Many delicate infants are kept in being only by the fostering care of their attendants. Literary people, who sacrifice their well-being in pursuit of knowledge or of fame, yet live long. Invalids, who cannot muster energy enough to set up a regular disease, are sometimes scores of years looking about for

some excuse for slipping off; and it is notorious, as a popular proverb, that when old dependants get infirm and bed-ridden, they *never die.*

It must not be supposed, either, that we are so enraptured with all that is unrefined, as to see any thing desirable in those extremes of poverty and desolation,

"Where hunger swallows all in one low want,
And the original ordinance that man should sweat
For his poor pittance, keeps all passions
Aloof, save fear of famine."

We behold not in the semi-vivified barbarian, nor in the stunted mountaineer, the choicest specimens of our race; on the contrary, we should be taught by our profession, if not by general observation, the common dependance of continued health and long life, (to say nothing of the more important points of character, and

social happiness) upon a certain degree of comfort, the moderate enjoyment of nature's best gifts, and the temperate use of all the faculties.

With all these allowances, then, we may stop short, and turning our view to the picture of artificial life and dense population, as they are placed before us, we may proceed, without prejudice or prepossession, to trace in them the evil that alloys the good; and we are far departed from all power of just appreciation, if these cannot be made to appear the hotbeds of innumerable ills: to be corrected, because they answer no useful or necessary purpose; to be warned against, because they are treacherous and betray!

PARTIAL EXERCISE OF THE FACULTIES.

The most obvious consequence of associated life is, the subjection of the faculties to partial development, and to a severe unremitting exercise, without sufficient provision or arrangement for rest and reparation. Great inequality in the distribution of wealth and attainments, and the infinite division of labour, vary the position, and constrain the energies of people in a thousand different ways. These circumstances are the acknowledged source of great good to the mass, by spurring on emulation, and concentrating the talents of men, but they are often noxious to the individual. The great social machine works on, but destroys the springs and hinges upon which it revolves. The oppor-

tunities and the conveniences which crowded cities offer to various pursuits and appetites, keep a motley swarm within the circle of its attraction. Here the man of letters, and the sensualist, the drudge in the lengthening wilds of a profession, and the gambler, all find the factitious atmosphere where they have best their being and devoting themselves each to the god of his idolatry, become victims to the great Saturn that devours all his children. The path each follows to exclusive good, is made to him the road to destruction. It is not by occasional excesses, but by continued enervating exhaustion of the nervous power, that the equilibrium of the vital functions is overthrown. After years of unvaried application to the calls of engrossing care, or voluptuous engagements, the whole fleshy fabric is relaxed: the muscles lose their defined shape

and tone, the skin its natural suffusion and smoothness, the extremities burn or freeze, the head throbs, and the heart flags. Without declared warfare, all the elements of our system rebel, and threaten to set up apoplexy, insanity, or some other form of disease, if attention be not turned to their wholesome government. If by any accidental circumstance, one of these followers of a fixed idea be thrown out of his habitual course of action, the elasticity of the complex organism is found to be impaired. The taste for strong excitement is not all at once exchanged for more gentle stimuli; and the overstrained faculties heave and swell, like the panting members of the newly reposed Hercules. We have only to look around us on 'Change, or in the societies of the dissipated, to see the dull eye and flabby corpulency of lethargic apathy,

or the pinched features of fidgetty irritability. The limbs are either shrunk and emaciated, or they are misshapen and bloated. The healthy glow, and spring, and plumpness of the breathing mass, are insensibly, but gradually extinguished and undermined. Diseases of the heart, and scirrhous indurations of the viscera are most common among anxious and intemperate people. Inflammatory complaints spring from sudden shocks and exposures; but chronic debilities grow out of habits of intense mental application, luxurious indulgence, and the undue provocation of the senses. Thus we find, that labouring men and savages suffer from acute fevers and rheumatism: but gout and tic-douloureux are the exclusive tormentors of the learned, pampered, and privileged classes.

Not the grosser corporeal appetites

alone are indulged with sure peril; the intellectual processes also may acquire an undue development, and "o'erinform the tenement of clay." The head outruns the natural feeling. In close pursuit of gain, the speculator shipwrecks his honour; and in constructing an exact system, the theorist stifles doubt, the parent of good sense. Tethered by habit, and kept from soaring above professional routine, the reasoning becomes too technical, and loses all power of expansion and consent of action; religion degenerates into crazy metaphysics; morals are made to square with some narrow, fine-drawn scheme of utility and expediency; and the whole wants the life's blood that flows from the heart. Calculating, but not appreciating, filled with science, but without judgment, one becomes a mere think-

ing machine, and forgets to be a man!

INACTION AND ISOLATION.

But the more insidious form in which men are made to pay the price of their standing in refined society, is to be discovered in that "opportunity of leisure" so long ago eulogized as the parent soil of reflection and moral excellence. This much abused advantage is placed in the hands, not of the noble and wealthy alone; but is often enjoyed in an inverse proportion to property and responsible station. The dependants of quiet families are proverbially idle and delicate as their masters. The book-worm, the day-dreamer, vegetate in the narrowest hermitages, and call oblivion content-

ment. The domains enjoyed by the poet have seldom been real worldly possessions; and the enduring constancy of the sluggard is proof against shame, as well as against chill and desolate poverty. It is much easier to starve out one's inclinations than to find provision for their support: passive courage is more common than energy.

There is no position in which a man may be so abstracted from the world, and so little acquainted with himself, as in that of an unemployed spectator of the busy throng. In village life, every one is a real known person; he is brought into collision with his fellows, his weight is ascertained, his strength tried, and if one's own reflection do not tell him of his failings, his "good-natured friends" are sure to do so; but in a great city, one may glide along, like Æneas in his cloud, unseen,

unfelt, without being scrutinized, without being appreciated. To those who are tremblingly alive to the rude breath of criticism, or who wish to sit still and mark the workings of the huge Leviathan, there is something irresistibly fascinating in this promised state of repose and liberty. Beginning with a wish to arrange an independent existence, and to escape annoyance, people become gradually reserved, shy, fastidious, isolated, selfish. Little interested about others, they grow thin-skinned about their own personal comforts and peculiar modes of thought, and with all "means and appliances," sensitiveness increases at the expense of sympathy. Withdrawing their stake in the great game which is playing around them, they no longer feel its spirit-stirring influence: the *tact* of affairs is lost, and in all social concerns they are

nervous and irresolute. Suspicion alternates with overweening confidence, and romantic attachment with misanthropy. Catching at supposed affronts, and exaggerating injustice, the fancy represents men (strange power of fancy!) worse than they really are. Religion, that "region wide," into which the soul is gladly shot up, to float "above the smoke and stir of this dim world," for the very reason that it is indefinite and inexhaustible in its nature, is apt to upset the mind, when this is not ballasted by some immediate and tangible purpose: and philosophy is still worse, for alone it neither elevates nor fixes. Unbraced, and out of practice, the passions which impel to action, do not rally with their wonted regularity; and all is enthusiasm or despondency. Project after project flits across the mind, and courts the vacillating will, each in its

turn pursued, all fruitless, or giving birth to something contemptible as the silly progeny of Solomon's thousand wives.

No greater mistake is ever made than when we are told by unreflecting people, that a state of repose and indolence is natural and desirable to all men. If this be ever the case, it can be predicated of those alone in the lowest grade of humanity. A New Hollander, or a Hottentot, may possibly be content to crawl on in the mire of sloth and brutality until compelled by irresistible necessity to bestir himself: there is nothing so alluring in the condition of these poor creatures as to make them objects of imitation. But with a refined and cultivated mind, and a station, however modest, provided it be without the reach of the call of compulsory duty, one has entailed upon him, a most

restless, troublesome companion, in the shape of a constant goading desire to be occupied. This harpy pursues the unemployed, and vitiates the banquet of tranquil life, by which they would fain recline themselves. Knowing that they are liable to its attacks, if they are caught idling, it is amusing to see by what pitiful contrivances people attempt to deceive themselves into a belief that they are busy. Pastimes and amusements are encumbered with regulations, and pleasures made formal and heavy. Importance is attached to the most trifling occurrences of "life's dull round," and the rules of etiquette and punctilio are enforced by the severest penalties. Although one has nothing real to do, yet "that nothing" must always be transacted at the most critical period of the day, and with all due observances of place and circumstance, or the charm

will not work. The man of leisure becomes often strangely metamorphosed into the most bustling, anxious repository of little paltry cares. Cheated of his own quiet, he keeps the most watchful, jealous look-out upon the repose of his neighbours; and woe be to the unfortunate slumberer upon whom he inflicts himself! We may observe, in the midst of all the refinement and abstraction of the most polished life, a perpetual tendency to recur to the realities of primitive society; as at the bottom of all the poetry and delusion of the ancient polytheism, the gods and goddesses were mere men and women. How often has the *beau ideal* of an exclusive sublimed existence, turned out to be but a sorry substitute for the variegated, but relishing mixture, which is provided for every one's repast! How often, alas! does the conviction of the

necessity for actively pursuing the real objects of life, come later than the fit season for exertion and enjoyment!

From a state of listlessness and irresolution, the most dreaded evils may spring. Up rises the imagination, a hideous, unformed spectre, and haunts the untenanted mind. Refuge from the fiend is sought in strong excitement, which is succeeded by moping, nervous melancholy. Indigestion, with its train of woes, follows from too great attention to the only regular business of the day—*eating and drinking*. If some hasty malady do not prevent, suicide is often called in as a relief from ennui. Or, where the sufferer is doomed to linger on his long disease, he can know neither pleasure nor repose. The deep shade and contrast which labour gives to the picture is not present, and there re-

mains but an unmeaning blank. Sleep flies his pillow, and enjoyment from the most alluring pastimes. A mere passenger in the ship of life, his sick existence is passed in disgust and nothingness!

Ladies, both by constitution and education, are particularly liable to suffer from the passive state induced by over-refinement. So much is present to captivate their native delicacy and timidity, that they do not perceive the danger of having these morbidly increased. Ever busied with unnumbered details, they have frequently no one engrossing occupation. Leaning for support on some loved relative, and deluded by the thought, that they may so continue secure and blameless, they prepare neither for the disappointments nor the duties of real life. The willing adoration of the protecting sex raises them above

the thoughts and cares of the busy world. They are never told of the uncertain tenure of sickly beauty's "frail and feverish being;" and they hear not the "still small voice" of nature, which warns them to be women. Untried, and close concealed, the character fails in stamina and spontaneous power, as from deficient exercise, the body wants symmetry and support, from the wiry fabric which has expanded unequally in the sultry drawing-room: and when these fair ones are called upon to be wives and mothers, they are often found to be doubly wanting.

PART II.

ON THE PRINCIPLES OF CURE.

THEORY OF REMEDIAL AGENCY.

It is the most remarkable feature of modern pathology and theories of medicine, that diseases are estimated not so much by their form and accidental phenomena, as by their history and supposed causes, and by their approximation to certain leading characters of morbid condition, under which they are classed. The practitioner after examining all the symptoms and diagnostic signs, which present themselves in any given case of importance, after endeavouring to appreciate the condition of the different systems of sensation, circulation, absorption, digestion, and so forth, and

considering the various circumstances, topical or general, which may vary their energy, or modify their action, reasons upon the most just and general relation of all these things, and makes a fair conclusion as to the intrinsic nature of the complaint: and it is to this abstract deduction, this inference, that he directs his aim. For instance, the state of being which we express by the term inflammation, is ascertained partly by the concurrence of certain signs deemed more or less necessary to its completion, partly by the fulfilment of certain laws which regulate its origin, progress, duration, and results. In some cases, the existence of all these circumstances is clearly and satisfactorily shown, for the whole series of occurrences is spread out before us; in others, we see only a few of the conditions complied with, and have to infer the rest, as from the

initial letters of a familiar name we learn the whole. This habit of just appreciation is not, however, arrived at speedily, or without great labour.

> "A thousand movements scarce one purpose gain."

We observe external inflammation of the conjunctiva, and we can figure to ourselves an internal parallel affection of the liver. We see the one with the eye, the other with the mind's eye; but without finding any exact correspondence of events, or systematic development of phenomena. We sometimes anticipate consequences from learning causes; sometimes from vestiges and effects, we trace backward the different stages and grades of the disorder during life, and in analogous instances. It is always a complex idea, arising from an acquaintance with a certain mode of vital action, and never

suggested by any one separate symptom. The same remarks will apply to insanity, and indeed to most other diseases, which are now rather *appreciated* than *defined*. Experience has fully shown, that if, aiming at certainty, we build up an ingenious system, consisting merely of the select and demonstrable portions of our knowledge, ere the key-stone is put in, the whole fabric falls to the ground. But if we keep the judgment hovering over the field of observation, and arrange and generalize our store of facts; (but, jealous of establishing fixed principles, we return again and again to the task of reasoning and subtilizing our conclusions;) if we learn to take all definitions, "*cum grano salis*," and to bestow most regard upon general conceptions, of vital condition; then we attain to the true mode of thinking and feeling on medical subjects.

The same simplicity which marks all pathological principles extends to our opinions concerning remedial agency. Remedies are not now so much separated into different families, according to the various departments of the body to which they are destined, or according to the select diseases, upon which they were once supposed to act, by some direct force or affinity; but they are used indifferently to control the functions, to set up new actions, and to evoke the vital energy, by the instrumentality of which alone, vigour and well being are restored. In a case of chlorosis, for example, we believe that health may be benefited equally by a course of steel, by a diet-drink, or by a gum-resin, according to the varying condition and peculiar demands of the system; but we do not now suppose that the red particles of the blood have been increased by

the iron, nor that the juices have been sweetened, neither do we talk of emmenagogues; because we conclude that the power of restoring healthy function is not inherent in any one external substance, but belongs to the living system, and is more what is called a *re-action* than a thing directly communicated. And besides we know that the same result is often brought about under other circumstances, by means of agents totally different in their nature; provided always that the remedy supplied be the remedy indicated; for that one is always the best which is the most *apropos*.

Disease is never a separate principle, but only a deviation from the natural or average condition, whether partial or general, whether accidentally induced upon the living function, or growing slowly out of its derangement; and any impression or circum-

stance, minute or general, which first gives occasion to the vital energy to regain its lost elasticity and tone, and to retrograde to its original state, must be looked upon as originating the cure. The exhibition of a tonic, or of a purgative, or a well ordered diet, which disposes the stomach to rally its lost vigour, and, by indirect means, promotes the general well-being of the whole economy, may constitute, as far as one can judge, the means of recovery to many complaints; but we do not suppose that any thing is ever done, except through the medium of the system itself. Every cure may be looked upon as a series of consequences, proceeding from the administration of some remedy, or the alteration of some morbid state of being, until the final restoration of health: and whether the cause first in order be accidental or intentional, whether

only once applied, or often repeated, many links in the chain must always be filled up by the natural restorative powers. It would be a stretch of language, indeed, to call that state of healthy function which it is our aim to establish, the means of cure; yet it must strike every one, that without some tendency to this state, some auxiliary *nisus* or resiliency, we should in vain seek in the most ingenious appliances and arrangements for any thing equivalent. On the other hand, the spontaneous effort of the vital powers, will, frequently, not alone suffice for the removal of obstructions, and the recovery of health. These faculties are occasionally in a state of inertness, and, like the *absent* people of Laputa, require a flapper; or they are pulling in a wrong direction, and there must be some *hint*, some new point of departure afforded. What-

ever be the nature of the cause to which we attribute the cure, be it the puncture of a needle, be it the juxtaposition of displaced parts, or be it the firing of a new train of thought, if we can fairly make out its connection with the improved action excited, and trace any sequence of events to its influence, we are called upon to give it rank as a proper instrument of remedial agency: and we are entitled to the claim of being esteemed promoters of the good end attained, if we have the means under our controul and management. Therefore to put faith exclusively in the resources of art, or to trust to the unassisted, natural restorative powers, is equally unfair and unphilosophical, for all our experience goes to establish their mutual connection and re-action.

These views may be perhaps better elucidated by attending to the appa-

rently paradoxical fact—that our power of curing a disease is very little in correspondence with, or in proportion to, our acquaintance with its evident form and character ; the disorders most regular in their progress, and most declared in their symptoms, are too often the most removed, likewise, from the reach of our art, and are frequently the most inveterate. Chronic ulcers, scrofula, schirrus, cancer, are but too evident and too constant. On many occasions we dread certainty more than any thing else ; to doubt about the existence of some maladies would be our greatest relief. Hydrophobia plays a part too appalling to be mistaken ; tetanus, though so generally fatal, is but slightly variable in its character; small-pox, when once in progress, urges on its undeviating, irresistible way. Many tumours, many skin diseases, are

much more pronounced and much better defined than we ever wish them to be. We observe all these enemies sweeping the field with reckless fury, or gradually entrenching themselves and extending their ostensible positions; but cannot discover where is head quarters, nor attack them in their citadel.

It seems to be rather in cases of violent turmoil, and where irregular action is going on, that we can step in, and check or regulate the course of the contending vital forces, and prevent their organized opposition. In fevers and topical congestions, in the mimic disorders of the nervous system, in the multiform consequences of indigestion, we have an ample sphere of usefulness; where again, by the skilful interposition of manual aid, we can place bones in apposition, or extract a calculus, cut down upon

an aneurism, remove a stricture, or turn a child *in utero*, we have indubitable proofs of the necessity and power of our art; but we must also allow, that even in the plainest cases, we act by means of our theoretical appreciation of concurrent causes, by our acquaintance with physiology, and the habits of action in different tissues, and by our dexterity in guiding and giving fair play to the vital functions, rather than by our study of the progress and symptoms, and our attention to the effects and consequences of disease. Therapeutics have been hitherto more advanced by physiology than by pathological anatomy; although this last is of the greatest importance in directing the aim, and in narrowing the field of experiment. As it is probable that no kind of professional research is altogether useless, and that, in time, the most use-

ful practical rules will be drawn from many kinds of labour, which have not as yet been repaid by immediate benefit, we can with the greatest sincerity declare, that we would not undervalue in the slightest degree the care so industriously bestowed in tracing and illustrating the vestiges of chronic and fatal maladies. Yet, at the same time, we may hazard an opinion, that if ever our power over morbid condition be enlarged, and we succeed in thinning the ranks of the now inveterate and incurable *opprobria* of our art, it will be his task to lead the way, whose moral sense, or reason, is most refined by multiplied observation and comparison, whose acuteness goes farthest in investigating the causes and history of depraved action, and whose practical skill is employed in combating that one essential circumstance

or point, whence all the subsequent phenomena spring, and upon which, in every case, they would probably turn.*

* The late French works of Andral, Bayle, Louis, Laennec, &c., have established the most accurate system of diagnosis in diseases of the chest, but unfortunately go to show the justice of our remarks about the backwardness of our therapeutic attainments. The following extract from the learned, ingenious, and indefatigable inventor of the stethoscope, will satisfy our reader that the conclusions we have arrived at, are not merely the result of abstraction and inactive contemplation.

"The causes of disease are, unfortunately, for the most part, beyond our reach; yet we learn from daily experience, that the particular character of the causes occasions greater differences among diseases (especially as regards their cure) than the nature and kind of the organic lésions. Many cases of pleurisy and peritonitis are equally untractable by venesection, as the local inflammation of gout, or that which precedes hospital gangrene. I am far from calling in question the utility of the study of diseases according to their anatomical characters. This

It must be always borne in mind, when we consider the different mani-

study has, indeed, been my constant occupation, and this work is entirely devoted to the exposition of its results. I am of opinion, that this study can alone constitute the basis of all positive knowledge in medicine; and that we can never lose sight of it in our etiological researches, without risk of pursuing illusions, and of creating phantoms in order to combat them. It is not given to all men to reach, like Sydenham, that high degree of medical tact, whereby we can safely disregard the details of diagnosis, and direct our practice by the *indications* only: and I believe that this great man would have been still more distinguished as a practitioner, could he have applied to the morbid anatomy of diseases, the same talent for observation, which he shewed in the study of symptoms, and in the application of remedies. At the same time, I consider it no less dangerous to bestow such an exclusive attention on local affections, as to make us lose sight of the causes whence they spring. The necessary consequence of this mode of proceeding, is to make us frequently mistake the effect for its cause, and to commit the still more serious error of considering as identical, and of treating in the same manner, all

festations of mental or corporeal power, that it is not in the object or

diseases which present the same anatomical characters. This error, which appears to be that of some practitioners of the present time, is to me quite inconceivable. It may perhaps be the consequence of a slight superficial attention to the study of morbid anatomy; but I consider it as impossible, that any person of good sense, who follows up this study carefully, and without systematic prejudices, can continue long under such a delusion."—P. 487.

"The study of pathological anatomy, in making us acquainted with the existence of important organic lesions in many cases, in which practitioners, too much addicted to the exclusive observation of symptoms, saw only cachexies, or alterations of the fluids, or at least nervous affections, has made us fall gradually into an error of an opposite kind; and among the present race of our pupils, many are as little disposed to acknowledge any nervous diseases besides the organic affections of the nerves, brain, and spinal marrow, as to admit any primary morbid changes in the fluids of the animal body.—P. 689. *Forbes's Translation of Laennec, 2nd Edition.*

subject of any action, that the great virtue lies, but rather in the passion or function that grapples with it. Food and drugs have, in themselves alone, no more strength or operation, when applied to the lethargic or unwilling stomach, than a book or engraving has, when laid before the gaze of an untutored savage. Their administration is merely the opportunity or occasion, upon which the vital energy is called into play; and it is the functional power, not the passive capacity, of any organ which is to be considered. Whether the application be made to the internal surface of the alimentary canal, or to an ulcerated extremity, it is still the living fibre, which is excited and interested. For though necessary to the transactions in which they bear a part, any articles of diet or medicine are subservient to various con-

trolling powers, and can of themselves do nothing; neither are they in any sort of accordance with the phenomena to which they administer. Vitality bids defiance, to a certain extent, to chemical and mechanical laws, or at least regulates and overrules their sway; and its deficiency is always best estimated, by the resistance which these last maintain, on some occasions, in opposition to it. This peculiar power is nevertheless bounded. Certain general laws hedge in the widest irregularities, and establish something like constancy in the occurrences belonging to natural functions. For instance, in digestion, the instrumentality of various organs is required, and these are more or less affected and disciplined, by circumstance and habit; and then the subject matter must contain certain elements of nutrition, and be free

from an excessive proportion of crude or poisonous alloy; but, after all, whatever be the diet, and whatever the precautions used as to time and preparation, it is still this unseen power of vital energy which acts and governs, and in fact, "makes the food it feeds on." If we look merely to secondary phenomena, without tracing them to their primary source, we shall not account for the condition of any one of the living functions. An explanation of the ultimate stages of digestion and assimilation, will in vain be sought in the most scrupulous analysis of the quality, and in the most exact admeasurement of the quantity of esculent substances, if at the same time the disorder or well-being of the complicated apparatus which is brought to bear upon them, be not estimated. How else shall we explain the impunity with which people in vigorous health feed upon the

most indigestible fare, the "*dura ilia messorum*," compared with the irritation which the simplest and properest food occasions, when the stomach is debilitated or diseased?

We draw from the foregoing considerations, that all the agents or circumstances, which modify the living powers, have not a direct or *positive*, but only an indirect or *relative* operation. It is their fitness and expediency, their practical effect, not their inherent virtue, and abstract definite qualities, which recommend them to our notice. For instance, when in the treatment of an injured joint, rest is enjoined at one period, on account of inflammation, and then motion is ordered, at another, to keep up the proper uses of the part, neither plan is of itself good or bad; but we have an example of the legitimate agency of the healing art, which alternately

interferes or looks on, as it is judged proper to check the tendency of vital actions, or to trust entirely to them. In this way alone, can we account for the remarkable similarity of effects brought about by causes, very different in their nature and mode of operation. We know that, in the treatment of many diseases, it is now a minute dose of a poison, now a total change in the habit of life, which sets up a new action in the system. At one time, the most active unremitting supply of corroborants is demanded, as in purulent discharges; at another, a total suspension of human agency, as in encouraging union by the first intention.

It is not possible to deny the truth of this statement, without refusing credence to the majority of writers and speakers on all occasions of professional conference and consultation;

and without taking a very partial and limited view of the laws of physiology, pathology, and therapeutics. But if we duly consider under what different circumstances the same series of external phenomena may exist, how different may be the conditions of the vital energy, and how various the aptitude of the inherent powers of the system, to profit by any opportunity of re-establishment; we shall be much less puzzled to explain these apparently discordant facts. By considerations such as these, we can easily subdue all tendency to pyrrhonism, reconcile discrepances which would else appear startling, and account for various revolutions in theory and practice, totally inexplicable in any other way. Hence, too, we learn to study, rather the varied applicability of remedial agents, than to confide in their specific power. We

must, it is true, from our limited powers of penetration and comprehension, and from the influence of habit, look with more favourable eyes upon those instruments which we have proved, and be inclined to account for their efficacy upon principles which we have deduced from actual trial, or from the common fund of experience and observation. But without denying the utility of a system of professional *orthodoxy*, we should be cautious of attaching ourselves with so much bigotry to any favourite class of remedies, as to exclude all others from their rank as auxiliaries. Our art should be, like the system which it aims to preserve, living and progressive; and we should learn not only what, but how to think.

We are then all prepared to admit that there must be causes operating, which we cannot appreciate, and to

acknowledge the assistance which we must always derive from the general laws which control life and health, and recovery from disease; but it is also certain, that so long as we have the power of stepping in to alter the direction of the vital processes, and to originate new actions in the system, we are untouched by the suspicion of the vulgar, who, ignorant of these principles, frequently consider the medical practitioner inefficient, when he is really exercising the greatest skill, and promoting the most beneficial results. In these matters, as in most others, where we are vitally concerned, we can obtain only moral evidence, and must not expect demonstration. There is a balance of probabilities, to be decided only by a majority of proof. In new and isolated cases, therefore, we have analogy only as our guide; and

proceed with less satisfaction and confidence, than in those which are more familiar. Where there is conflicting testimony in favour of opposite methods, we must always suppose a variation in the circumstances of the disease and of the treatment. Where the most frequently repeated experiments, establish the character of a remedy, we find still a call for attention to its application and management; as in the employment of mercury and venesection. Even the inestimable value of the vaccine matter, as a preventative of small-pox, though established beyond doubt in a general view, is yet subject to fluctuation, from circumstances which modify its action and defeat its operation, and which prevent our regarding it as a sure specific. Our profession, in its practical capacity, being then not a science, but simply the art of ap-

plying the medical sciences,* we must go on reasoning and inferring, and nicely weighing contingencies, and acting upon general deductions from our multiplied observations, still prepared to find the fading system of to-day, give place to the more enlarged and more refined theory of to-morrow; and we may leave to mathematicians the task of determining how far the power of human agency can be made to square exactly with the causes upon which depraved action depend, when diseases and their cures shall be reduced to definite proportions, medicine as an art abolished, and all such matters, not managed by physicians, surgeons, and accoucheurs, but settled by Cocker's Arithmetic!

* See the Author's pamphlet, on the Division of Labour in Medical Practice.—Hatchard and Son.

RE-AGENCY OF MORAL CAUSES.

HAVING considered the mode of operation of remedial agents, it will be to our purpose to take a general survey of the influence of certain powers, too often unheeded, which, in our view, may be enlisted under this name. The human constitution is to be considered, not in the partial, narrow light of a collection of organs and corporeal functions alone, but must be taken in its connection and correspondence with all the surrounding beings, which modify and develop its powers. Of these, there are none to which the first rank, both in interest and general operation, so truly belongs, as the passions and intellectual faculties.

The success and the propriety with which we pursue any investigation into what are termed the phenomena of mind, will, perhaps, depend entirely

upon the object which we propose to ourselves in making the research, and the mode in which we proceed. If we expect to establish any consistent, definite, abstract system of intellectual science, by analyzing the essential nature of those supposed principles, to which the secondary manifestations of mind are attributed, we shall without fail be disappointed; but if we keep at a more modest distance, and, instead of inquiring what and why they are, content ourselves with observing how they comport themselves, and according to what laws they act, we shall probably have a much better chance of being repaid for our labour. It is in this matter, more, perhaps, than in any other, that it becomes us—

"To learn what little's useful to be known,
And what's that science which impairs the sense."

Suppose then that, instead of pry-

ing into metaphysics, and atomic theories, we consider whether the moral agents, the faculties of the mind, the will and understanding, (or whatever else they may be called,) have not some set limits to their extension, some character of action, and do not supply us with sufficient opportunities of becoming acquainted and familiarized with them? For, of course, if the understanding have no bounds, the passions no consistent course, the volition no law, it will be impossible to gain, by the most accurate investigation, or by the longest experience, any useful or available knowledge of beings so measureless and so free. Seeing no limit, we can form no judgment concerning extent; receiving no repeated impression, we cannot suppose habitual action. There must be some general and common tendency, some *moral gravitation* in

the unseen, as in the visible system, or we shall never be able to frame any lucid arrangement from the most multiplied observations.

Taking, therefore, the most practical and common-place view of these matters, without diverging to inquire "whence they are, or whither they go," let us simply endeavour to estimate, by a general glance, their power and agency, which alone constitute the aim of our research. For example, we know that the intellect is so constituted, that it can neither suppose nor believe the contrary of a mathematical axiom. Let us reflect, that no effort of human ingenuity, with all the aid of chemistry, mechanics, and all natural philosophy, has ever been able to construct any thing approaching to the character of the simplest organized being, as a blade of grass; nor even to discover the first rudiments of vita-

lity; let us consider that we have frequently the most trivial fiction traced to its oriental origin, through ages of transmigration; and hear, from time to time, the loud contention of poets, who are claiming their right of discovery in that "pearl of great price"—an original thought; and we shall not call the intellect or the imagination unlimited powers. If we discover the most striking parallel existing between the character and actions of nations and individuals, upon occasions similar in kind, and under circumstances of like operation, and find all history and all details of the private life and sentiments of our predecessors bearing testimony to the fact, that, even in the realms of vice and folly, "there is nothing new under the sun;" for that, let a man be as wicked in practice, or as absurd in opinion as he please, he is sure to

have his prototype in some "worthy of antiquity;" this will surely impress us with the conviction that there is some principle of method and constancy in the feelings and actions of men, and that the old maxim, "*ex nihilo nihil fit*," holds good in moral as in physical occurrences. And when we know that the laws of different countries have long declared under what circumstances of age, publicity, and so forth, the voluntary act of a person (that is to say, certain manifestations of design and intention, ratified by settled conventional forms and pledges), shall be considered binding upon him during all life, as in marriage; or shall extend his influence over a long line of successors, as in wills: and when we see daily, any twelve plain citizens called upon to determine upon the previous existence of a malicious intention, as manifested on some given

occasions, and under certain detailed concomitant circumstances; and when we understand that upon their mere inference, as to the occurrence of this *malus animus*, this *malice prepense*, (a thing neither tangible nor visible, always denied by the party accused, but justly considered necessary to the constitution of crime,) the life of many a fellow-creature depends; when we reflect upon these and similar undeniable truths, we must all agree that the mind has plainly a limited, constant, and familiar character, and that in this experimental manner, physicians have a right to treat of the moral agents on an equal footing with others: for if they are thought to be ignorant of these matters, they stand alone, as the only class of people who are so.*

* This doubtless must be one reason why medical men are not liable to serve on juries!!!

But we should willingly have left all such considerations to wiser heads, had we not looked upon the intellectual faculties and the affections, as beings not to be talked of only, but as re-agents, which may be made subservient to our purpose, and auxiliaries in our mode of cure. It is with a view to this important and practical end, that we inquire, whether it be ever allowed us to assemble these spirits of the deep, by throwing out the food upon which they feed, and to summon them by pronouncing the spell which they obey? In matters which we know to be under the controul of habit, and so much modified by circumstance, shall we not endeavour to discipline and educate the unruly, and to elicit and develop those which are deficient? We cannot, it is true, create a passion; but we can perhaps lay a

train for its appearance; we cannot either form a seed, or construct a plant; but we can cultivate the soil from which they spring, and provoke them by arrangements and contrivances of our own. Shall then the physician, who is, *par excellence*, the creature of real life, who is all things unto all men, the connecting link of all stages of society, the witness of every act, and the repository of every secret—shall he content himself with advising the frantic man to "be calm," and directing the hypochondriac to "keep up his spirits?" Shall he not rather, in critical circumstances, exercise a temporary power of dictating, and provide "*ne quid damni capiat respublica?*" "Dè l'ascendant que les ames fortes ont sur les esprits faibles."

On many occasions of great difficulty, where no definite mischief can

be ascertained; but where both body and mind are ill at ease, it becomes us to inquire, whether the sufferer be really playing his part in this great theatre of action; and whether his social position be such as to give a due share of employment to all the mental and corporeal functions? If we can discover by our investigation any partial excess of development, or any general deficiency of exercise, and can trace to this source, that state of doubtful and negative disorder, which is frequently the precursor of irremediable disease, it is our duty to suggest, and in some cases to enforce, such pursuits or modes of life as are most likely to maintain the equilibrium and activity of the whole man; and the physician who stops short of this, the ultimate aim of his art, knows not half his power, uses not half his store of weapons. In most cases, it is true,

one cannot renovate the constitution, nor materially alter old inveterate habits, any more than he can provide occupation for the unemployed, or maintenance for the overworked; but there are perhaps no instances where some evils may not be alleviated, by persuading the patient to relinquish what is obviously noxious, or to adopt what is indispensable to health and well being. To any one who may be inclined to doubt the immediate agency of mental emotion upon the bodily functions we would suggest the reflection, which daily experience confirms, that anxiety will deprive the mouth of taste, and the stomach of its digesting power; a sudden piece of news will cause fainting; an imprudent word will stop labour-pains; and the approach of certain death will often make the stoutest ruffian quake and totter. And what drug will do

all these things? We all know that the spirit of enterprise in travellers will buoy them up in the midst of the most depressing circumstances; that in shipwrecks, incredible efforts are willingly made, and the most cruel hardships safely endured; and we hear of many soldiers who, like Fabius of old, have been cured of an ague-fit on the morning of battle.

In a mere sketch like this, we shall not be expected to enter deeply into the consideration of the many circumstances which modify and excite the energy of the mind and body, in their joint and indivisible capacity; the research would be difficult and endless: but we may be permitted to make a few general reflections upon this subject, which will sufficiently answer our purpose—of directing the attention of our reader to the impor-

tance of moral causes and general remedies.

And, in the first place, we would speak of the necessity of labour, or compulsory occupation. The well-being of the human constitution seems best secured by an alternation of action, pleasure, and rest; and although the proportions must be changed according to the different varieties of age, constitution, and habit, yet no one ingredient in the mixture can be entirely left out, without impairing the whole composition. Mere bodily labour, without thought or object, as in the tread-mill, is as little related to the due exercise of the entire system, as intense study or application of mind in a sedentary posture, or in a confined room. But such professions or modes of life as call for a repeated, regular, and varied exercise of the vital ener-

gies, will be found to yield the proper stimulus to the body, and the fittest pabulum for the mind. There must be always something which cannot be escaped from, which controls us, and excites a feeling of interest and responsibility, or it does not merit the name of occupation. When this turn is acquired, every thing is in a good train. The faculties expand with the occasion, and the capacity increases with the taste for employment. Many minor evils, which assail the unoccupied, are merged in the overwhelming excitement which strong emotion produces. The phantasms of the idle and irresolute are dispelled by peremptory duty, as the little sicknesses of the invalid are vanished by the exhilaration of some tour or expedition. In a state of activity, the mind grapples cheerfully with difficulties, which would be quite appalling to the indo-

lent and passive; as the body of the practised athlete meets, without shrinking, the blows which would demolish a relaxed or recumbent person. Not the pleasures of the imagination alone require energy of mind, but corporeal appetites must be created, or at least developed, by mental activity. Every enjoyment, even that of eating and drinking, is increased by pleasing association and reminiscence; while, on the other hand, in a supine state, no kind of gratification, however offered, equals, in reality and intensity, the pain one can at any time procure by *biting his finger!*

It is necessary to bear in mind, that there is, in permanent effect, a wide difference between compulsory and voluntary occupation; between a difficulty which calls upon us to exert our energies whether we choose or no, and one that we may coquet with; be-

tween, in short, *business* and *pastime*. Many people imagine, when they make violent exertions, run into danger, and pursue things distant and difficult, that they are employed; without reflecting upon the irregular excitement produced by the desultory nature of their active fits, and the state of collapse into which all the faculties subside after each occasion of strong isolated stimulus. Others again, are continually administering *placebos* to the natural restlessness and craving of both body and mind for employment, instead of supplying the proper food. *Fine* works, *safe* games, *amateur* arts, all equally useless, tiresome, and tasteless, keep them midway between reflection and occupation. The somnolency which this plan of *killing time* produces, is highly useful in states of convalescence from acute disease, and in cases where we

intend gradually to restore the suppleness and elasticity of the overstrained faculties; but can never be considered as a proper condition for those capable of being made healthy and active.

It is a matter of common observation, that many sources of pleasure and profit, whence some have derived the greatest benefit, are not useful upon any one unvaried principle. Gardening, sporting, travelling,* must employ, or they do not even please,

* "We crossed the plain at sunrise; and the fresh air of the morning was extremely agreeable. There is nothing which so much compensates for the miseries of travelling in the Arabian deserts, as the pleasure of enjoying, every morning, the sublime spectacle of the break of day, and of the rising of the sun, which is always accompanied, even in the hottest season, with a refreshing breeze. It was an invariable custom with me, at setting out early in the morning, to walk on foot, for a few hours in advance of the caravan; and as pleasures are com-

much less do good. A tour upon the continent,* which restores the jaded energies of the toil-worn man of business, which soothes the irritability of the hectic invalid, and affords the most abundant field of gratification to the artist and to the physician, is the worst of all possible things for the chivalrous, headstrong youth, impatient of leading-strings, or to the melancholy enthusiast, whose masculine temper spurns at the allurements of sense and taste, and is to be won only by duty and by danger. Germany's castles, and Italy's purpled hills, which awake the busy fancy of the romantic

parative,† I believe that I derived from this practice greater pleasure than any which the arts of the most luxurious capitals can afford."—*Burkhardt's Travels*, vol. ii. p. 476.

* See this well described by Dr. Jas. Johnson.

† He should have said *relative*.

girl, and fill up an enchanting episode in the still life of the poet and the scholar, form no part of the existence of these people ;—what they want is much "stronger meat"—the controul of occupation and responsibility. They are much better employed in ploughing the seas, and subduing the face of new countries, or when bound by domestic, or social, or political ties to theirown.

It is not a very easy thing to persuade a literary man that he is following a pernicious course of life, or to wean a sensualist from debasing indulgence : but we may often open their eyes to see the distinction between real occupation and its many substitutes, and engage them to ascertain what is the true bent of the mind, what pursuits most interest, and what things really *bite* the fancy. Every disposition may be well or ill employed; and many

persons who will not relinquish a favourite purpose, may yet be induced to sacrifice immediate good for an ultimate end; or, in other words, to pursue pleasure *on principle.* We may often do good by varying the objects of thought, by lulling to sleep inordinate appetites, and arousing new tastes; without, however, aiming at great changes and sudden revolutions; without expecting to make a keen sportsman all at once of a *philosopher*, or setting the man, whose "talk is of bullocks," to discover the longitude. When, for instance, we can discover in the midst of the *dolce far niente* of a lounger's life one portion of real duty, we should persuade him to make the most of it, and fondle it as young girls are taught to do by babies, that the taste may grow—only let it be a real baby, and not a *doll. L'appétit vient en mangeant*, is a maxim as true

in real life as in gastronomy, and should be borne in mind when we wish gradually to encourage and strengthen proper habits. But if we have to do with timid, cautious people, too much regard should not be paid to their irresolution; the volition must be roused by example and trial, and not left to come of itself. *There is no stimulus like the stimulus of necessity.*

SUMMARY OBSERVATIONS ON DIGESTION.

It is not our intention to speak at large upon the subject of digestion, nor to trench upon the ground already cultivated by so many master-hands; but some few reflections are suggested, by the view we take of the indeterminate and relative power of all the vital functions. Apart from

other concurrent causes of injury, the food in general use among any civilized people is always the most wholesome. Some principle of utility, and not mere taste or caprice, has commonly led to its adoption or cultivation. If there is a prevalent fault, it will be, perhaps, found to be, that it is often too concentrated, and too full of nutriment; but, except in cases of gross violation of the customary rules of moderation in diet, we are inclined to attribute most cases of indigestion, not so much to the quantity or quality of food, as to the debased state of the vital energy of the system, and the preternatural exhaustion of its nervous power, induced by unremitting exercise and excitement, or by inaction. These circumstances, not only lower the tone and diminish the solvent capacity of the organs which minister to

digestion; but they, in the first place, deprave the taste and pervert the appetite. The practical value of innocuous and invigorating food, which is always a main consideration with the active and robust, is not attended to by the epicure, whose attention is merely rivetted by the minute shades of impression upon the palate. The cordial sensation, which the ingestion of favourite viands, in the first instance, creates, makes one inattentive to the more important consideration of the power of the system to transact the ultimate stages of assimilation and excretion; thus we see the student and the anxious man erring as much, though in a different way, as the green-sick girl, in the heedlessness with which they swallow food, which does not suit their condition. But even here, there is no positive rule for all cases; for we have abund-

ance of proof, that at times the craving of a delicate stomach is our best guide.* We may be sure, however, that unless we remount to the general causes which influence vitality (and digestion among other functions), we shall find no explanation of their various modifications, and can proceed with no prospect of success. In fevers and in insanity, we find the common demands of the stomach are suspended; its action is diminished by hot climates, by application of mind, and by depressing passions; and it is increased, during convalesence, by modes of life which exhilarate, by cold weather, and frequently during consumptions, and in old age. Our knowledge on the subject of digestion is purely experimental;† but our prac-

* Abernethy's Surgical Observations, p. 68.

† See many philosophical reflections by Dr. Uwins.

tice should be *rational experiment*, aiming rather to discover the laws which influence it, than resting satisfied with isolated results, obtained without relation to varieties of modifying circumstances.

Nothing can be added to what has been already pronounced on the subject of real indigestion. When there is disorder actually established, whether functional or organic, the most rigid attention, both of the patient and his medical adviser, is imperiously demanded, in order to discover and to adopt the particular plan which really suits the case. Whether the indication be to physic, food, or *training*, general rules must be kept in view, but not blindly followed; and varieties of habit and idiosyncracies attended to, but not indulged. But we have aimed rather to consider the tendency of agents,

which can be diverted before they settle in injurious effects, and to describe the causes of disease rather than disease itself; and, in pursuance of this plan, would advise an attention to the subject of *appetite*, rather than to that of food, and attach more importance to general constitution and habits of life, than to particular dietetic details; for what can be more striking than the practical contrast between the invalid who avoids with the greatest caution the sauces, and vegetables, and pastry, which he fears may disagree, and the ploughman who prefers the raw indigestible fare that best "stays his stomach?" How opposite the diet, both in quality and quantity, of a Brahmin, and a hunting Indian of frozen America! How different the effect of dram-drinking in a highlander and a hackney-coachman!

Take, as a picture of temperate existence, the following description, from Burkhardt's Travels.* "The provision of my companions consisted only of flour; besides flour, I carried some butter and dried leben (some milk), which, when dissolved in water, forms not only a refreshing beverage, but is much recommended, as a preservative of health when travelling in summer. These were our only provisions. During the journey, we did not sup till after sun-set, and we breakfasted in the morning upon a piece of dry bread, which we baked in the ashes the preceding evening, without either salt or leaven. The frugality of these Bedouins is indeed without example; my companions, who walked at least five hours every day, supported themselves for four-and-twenty hours with a piece of dry black bread,

* Burkhardt's Travels, Vol. II.

of about a pound and a half weight, without any other kind of nourishment. I endeavoured, as much as possible, to imitate this abstemiousness, being already convinced, from experience, that it is the best preservative against the effects of the fatigue of such a journey." Let any one read this, and then, if he is fond of antithesis, let him travel with a dozen healthy, jovial, voracious Germans, in their land of good humour, and he will have a pleasant illustration of an opposite mode of life.

ON IMPROVING THE NATURAL TENDENCY TO RECOVERY.

We shall finish this faint outline of our principles of reasoning and practising, by directing the attention of our reader to the important conclusion—

that, if judicious endeavours be made, and fair play given to the natural tendency of the system to spontaneous preservation, and recovery, much time and great suffering may frequently be saved; and improved, if not perfect health, may be hoped for, in cases that are often given up, as inveterate and desperate. Diseases which have lingered through many a season and have withstood the brunt of all that science could suggest, or that quackery dared risk, have frequently disappeared, when some new mode of life has been accidentally forced upon the patient, or some thorough revolution in constitutional condition has occurred. Many well-fed victuallers have been cured of their gout, by the hardships and privations of a retreat. Many consumptive, frightened girls, have become healthy and strong-minded, as mothers. Frequently we

observe poor sufferers, exhausted, and sleepless, from some lingering cause of irritability and pain, who procrastinate from day to day, the dreaded operation, and prefer the wasting miseries of fine-drawn woe, to one short struggle with danger and with agony; yet, when the hour of trial has irrevocably come, bear up serene and undaunted against the enemy, and begin from this moment of victory, a new life of energy and health. It is no unusual thing, to see a man whose powers, both physical and moral, are drooping in oblivion, and who at home seems fast passing into the "yellow leaf," when transplanted to a new soil take vigorous root and flourish. It is never too late. Striking examples could be given, too, of eccentric and ungovernable persons, whose fitful, volcanic youth, has subsided into steady, temperate maturity.

Let any one, the most staid and stedfast, look back upon all that he has done and escaped from, and he will acknowledge, that a hand unseen has been at work, helping his efforts—some under-current wafting him on, while he laboured, and overruling all his struggles and all his perils, to the attainment of that greatest purpose of earthly life – *Experience*—"*Curis acuens mortalia corda.*" There is no reason, then whatever, why, on many occasions, where the means are at hand, these desirable ends should not be anticipated and promoted, instead of being merely hoped and waited for. We enjoy at the present day the accumulated knowledge of all preceding ages; and with the most abundant sources of evil, have also the most varied means of recovery. All climates and all modes of life are free to us. We can be cosmopolites, without

leaving our own realms, and we all form part of a living political system, which is without rival and without parallel.

The man then, who quarrels with his physician because he cannot produce some drug of a power so magical as to charm away all the grim ministers of death, and in a fit of despair supinely resigns his cure to time alone, is like one, who expects to reap where he has not sown! But if he can be aroused to join his adviser in instituting a series of experiments, duly guarded by analogy, but not too much restricted by routine—repeated when success warrants their use, or totally varied, if one fixed plan is found unavailing—minute where morbid action can be traced into a corner, or general, when it depends upon predisposing or constitutional causes—such a course of endeavour, candid,

assiduous, and rational, deserves the name of cure, and will often meet with the success which it merits.

Let both parties "put the shoulder to the wheel," and in good faith abide by the result:

"Nullum numen abest si adsit prudentia."

SHACKELL AND BAYLIS, JOHNSON'S-COURT.